Marked Up Version of Amended Claims

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)

1. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as [at least one of the oligonucleotides] a primer in the nucleic acid amplification reaction,

wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides,

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the one or more template-deficient nucleotides are at [or near] the 5' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide.

19. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the nucleic acid amplification reaction is selected from the group consisting of exponential rolling circle amplification (ERCA), [and] rolling circle amplification (RCA), multiple displacement amplification (MDA), strand displacement amplification (SDA), nucleic acid sequence based amplification (NASBA), transcription-mediated amplification (TMA), polymerase chain reaction (PCR), self-sustained sequence replication (3SR), amplification with Qβ replicase, and cycle sequencing.

23. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as [at least one of the oligonucleotides] a primer in the nucleic acid amplification reaction,

wherein the nucleic acid amplification reaction does not involve [cycle sequencing] thermal cycling.

27. (Amended) The method of [26] 23 wherein the nucleic acid amplification is rolling circle amplification.

31. (Amended) The method of claim 23 wherein the nucleic acid amplification reaction is selected from the group consisting of exponential rolling circle amplification (ERCA), [and] rolling circle amplification (RCA), multiple displacement amplification (MDA), strand displacement amplification (SDA), nucleic acid sequence based amplification (NASBA), transcription-mediated amplification (TMA), [polymerase chain reaction (PCR),] self-sustained sequence replication (3SR), and amplification with Qβ replicase.

33. (Amended) The method of claim 32 wherein the one or more template-deficient nucleotides are at [or near] the 5' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide.